

Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers La., Rm. 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

1337 '99 OCT 21 P2:04

Dear Dockets Management Branch,

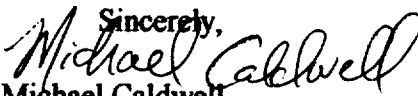
This letter is in response to the question of ways to reduce salmonella in eggs. Docket nos. 98N-1230, 96P-0418, and 97P-0197. The most effective and direct way to reduce salmonella in eggs would be to eliminate the practice of forced molting.

Every year, when egg production drops, approximately 195 million hens in North America endure a bizarre torment called forced molting. This cruel practice throws the hens' systems into collapse, stressing and shocking their worn-out bodies into laying one more batch of eggs before being sent to slaughter. The frightened birds are deprived of food for up to two weeks, water is restricted for up to eight weeks and they are kept in pitch dark for weeks on end. As a result, hundreds of thousands die while those who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers, and loose up to 35 percent of their body weight. Forced molting also weakens hens' bones, resulting in fragile, broken limbs.

Recent research, including a study conducted by U.S. government scientists, show that forced molting can be harmful to humans as well. The studies show forced molting increases the frequency and severity of Salmonella enteritidis among hens. The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.

Salmonella in eggs is a serious problem and serious actions must be taken to prevent contamination. Warning labels on egg cartons about safe handling and regulations on egg refrigeration temperatures do little to nothing to stop this problem. It is going to take a big commitment to stop salmonella in eggs and eliminating forced molting is the answer.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Sincerely,  
  
Michael Caldwell  
1667 Lakehurst Dr.  
Ft. Wayne IN, 46815-7585

96P-0418

C 757

CROSS FILE SHEET

File Number: 98N-1230/ *C 757*

See File Number: 97P-0197/ *C 758*  
96P-0418/ *C 757*

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